

Award-Winning Outdoors Writer and Photographer

When Chip Gross was a young lad, he took pad and pencil into the woods and sat down. He observed the life around him—the sounds, the shapes, the colors—the living, breathing creation that engaged his senses. And what came to him were volumes.

These keen observations of the natural world eventually led Gross to a degree in wildlife management from Ohio State University and a rewarding career as an outdoors writer and photographer—observations he has shared with readers across Ohio and well beyond for many years.

Chances are good you have seen his work, either stories, photos, or both. During the latter part of a 27-year career with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, Chip served as editor of *Wild Ohio* and *Wild Ohio for Kids*, wildlife magazines produced by that state agency. Under Gross's leadership, those two publications were awarded the prestigious James P. Barry Ohioana Award for Editorial Excellence in 2001.

A year later, Chip took an early retirement option and launched his career as a full-time writer and photographer specializing in outdoor subjects. Far from being a leap of faith, however, he was already well-established as a freelance writer and photographer with bylines and photo credits in many outdoor publications.

Today, Chip's writing and photos can be seen and enjoyed in such venues as *Country Living* magazine, where he is the Outdoors Editor. Published by the Ohio Rural Electric Cooperatives, the magazine reaches nearly 300,000 households every month. He writes for other outdoors-oriented magazines, as well, both regional and

national. And adapting with the times, recently Chip has been focusing his attention on online publications, such as *FieldandStream.com* and *OutdoorChannel.com*

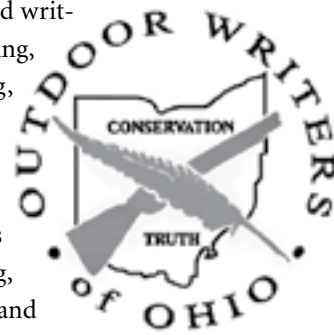
His work has been recognized and awarded both locally and nationally, by the Outdoor Writers of Ohio (OWO) and the Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA). He has also served as an officer in both of those professional organizations, as president of OWO in 1991 and a member of the Board of Directors of OWAA from 2004-2007.

Chip's prolific writing and photography reflect his love of wildlife, people, and the out-of-doors. His varied writing topics include fishing, hunting, birding, camping, hiking, canoeing/kayaking, outdoor photography, nature travel, and humor, to name just a few. His extensive catalogue of outdoor photographs—more than 30,000 color images—includes landscapes, wildlife, freshwater fishing, small-game hunting, wildlife watching, and people enjoying the outdoors.

So how did Gross first develop an interest in the outdoors? "Growing up in north-central Ohio, my father taught me to hunt and my grandfather taught me to fish," Chip remembers. "I couldn't seem to get enough of the natural world as a kid, and those two activities—hunting and fishing—just naturally led me to other outdoor pursuits such as birding, hiking, camping, and outdoor photography."

Gross also remembers the very first piece of writing he ever sold. "It was a very short hunting tip to *Sports Afield* magazine's Almanac Section in 1981," he said. "In three brief paragraphs, titled Mudproofing Anchors, I explained how to keep mud off duck decoy anchors. Not exactly Pulitzer Prize-winning literature," Gross laughed, "but the magazine paid me \$35 for the item, and I couldn't have been more excited. It was my start."

What does a busy outdoors writer, photographer, and professional speaker do to unwind? Chip and wife Jan, a retired registered nurse, enjoy the solitude and inspiration of their 13-acre Tree Farm in Morrow County.



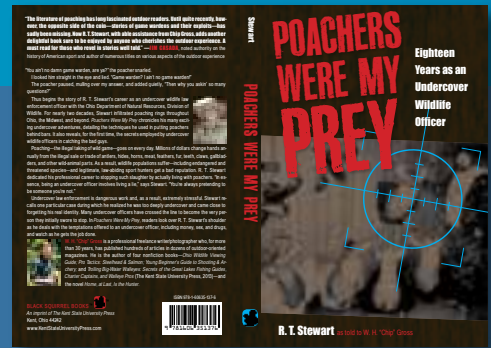
"We bought the woods and house 35 years ago as a place to raise our two sons," Gross said. "Through the years, we have done timber stand improvement projects on the property, cut firewood, sold timber, and enjoyed the tax-break incentives from managing our trees. Fortunately, our two boys shared our appreciation of the outdoors while growing up here, and now enjoy bringing their young families back to visit."

Now age 60, Gross has spent a lifetime out of doors, then sharing those experiences of the natural world through his writing and photography. Anyone in Ohio who has picked up an outdoors magazine has likely enjoyed not only his informative writing style and sensational photos, but has come away with a better understanding and appreciation of all things wild.

"God's creation is always spectacular and ever-changing," quipped Gross. "I can't thank Him enough for allowing me to experience all I have, and then giving me the ability to communicate those adventures to others. There truly is magic in the out-of-doors." ♦

In addition to being a writer/photographer, W. H. "Chip" Gross is also available as a professional speaker for groups looking for a wildlife and outdoors-oriented slideshow program. For more information, he can be reached by email at whchipgross@gmail.com; his web site www.chipgross.com.

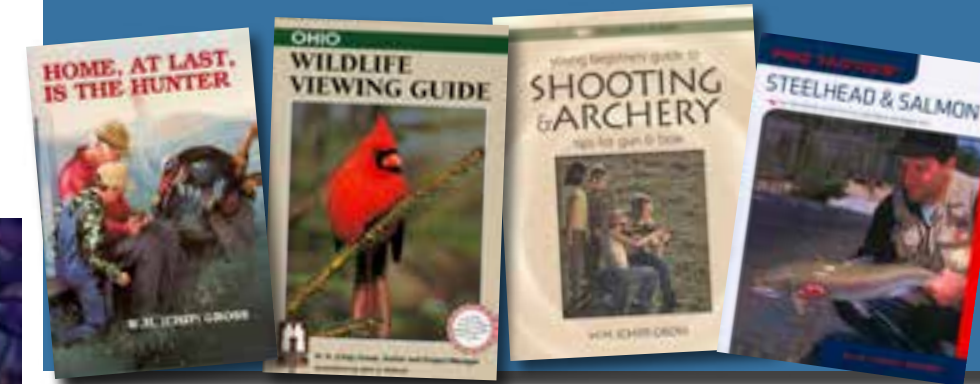
Books by Chip Gross



W. H. "Chip" Gross is the author of four nonfiction books and one fiction novel:

- *Ohio Wildlife Viewing Guide*
- *Pro Tactics: Steelhead & Salmon*
- *Young Beginner's Guide to Shooting & Archery*
- *Home, At Last, Is the Hunter (fiction)*
- *Poachers Were My Prey: 18 Years as an Undercover Wildlife Officer* — Just published in the fall of 2012, this book highlights the career of fabled Ohio undercover wildlife officer R.T. Stewart.

Chip's sixth book, titled *Trolling Big-Water Walleyes: Secrets of the Great Lakes Charter Captains, Fishing Guides, and Walleye Pros*, is scheduled for publication by Kent State University Press in 2013.



Photos courtesy of Chip Gross.